

TRENCH SAFETY

Prevent Worker Injury When Working in Trenches



- Protect workers from cave-ins when trenches are at least 5' deep and from shallower trenches where a cave-in hazard exists.
 - Do this by supporting the walls with shoring, shielding workers with trench boxes, or sloping the walls back wide enough, per the OSHA Excavation Standard.
- Protect employees from water accumulation by pumping out ground or utility water.
- Provide ladders to workers when working in trenches of at least 4'.
- Call Dig Safe at 1-888-344-7233 to identify underground utilities.
- Ensure that workers wear high-visibility clothing when working around vehicle traffic.
- Use appropriate work zone signage and traffic channeling set-ups.
- Spoils must be placed 2' from the trench edge.
- Do not allow employees to work under suspended or raised loads or materials.
- A competent person must inspect each trench worksite, including the soil protective system, before the start of work, and again if there is a hazard-increasing change in conditions, like a rainstorm.

Resources from the Department of Labor Standards

Download a copy of our [Trench Template Program and Inspection Worksheet](#)